

DEPARTMENT OF STATE



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PRESS CONFERENCE BY
THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
AND HIS EXCELLENCY ANTHONY CROSLAND
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
U.S. EMBASSY
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SECRETARY KISSINGER: First of all, I wanted to thank Mr. Crosland for agreeing to come over here. After it had been set up as a press conference for me, he agreed to join me.

I wanted to make only one point before we go to questions — that I have seen many references that the Rhodesian authorities are now considering a Kissinger proposal. I think it is well to understand what is being considered in Salisbury, or what has been considered in Salisbury all week. First of all, the basis of the proposals is the plan put forward by Prime Minister Callaghan on March 22. This has been elaborated in detailed consultations between the British and American Governments. There have been five missions to Africa — three American and two British — in which these ideas were discussed in great detail with the African presidents and refined in the light of their comment. So what is being considered in Salisbury is not the plan of an individual but what we hope reflects a consensus between the United States, the United Kingdom and the essential requirements of the leaders of Africa. It is on this basis that we hope to make our contribution to the solution of the future of southern Africa.

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: I would like to underline that. The British Government for the last two or three weeks has deliberately remained in a not very visible position on the grounds that you couldn't have people trying to negotiate vicariously over a distance of 5,000 miles or whatever it is. But what Dr. Kissinger says is right. This has been very much of a joint plan. I think my first event as Foreign Secretary was to meet Dr. Kissinger on an airfield in Lincolnshire and since then we have met six times at least — with the Prime Minister very often —

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to discuss this. Respective officials — British officials — have been to Washington many times. State Department officials have been to London many times and, as Dr. Kissinger says, the missions to southern Africa have been, to some extent, shared between the two countries. So he's quite right to say — though I should add that this in no way diminishes the very high proportion of the total credit that he, Dr. Kissinger, deserves. He's quite right to say that the plan within the broad framework of which he's been operating in recent weeks, and indeed in recent months, has been to a very large extent a collective one.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, if I could follow that up with a question to both of you gentlemen. Now that the shuttle is finished — I presume you are not going back — does the lead in the diplomatic process now pass to the British?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: If the Rhodesian authorities decide favorably, the next step will have to be a discussion of legal and governmental coordination in Rhodesia. Britain has a historic and legal role in this respect and it would therefore seem to us natural that Britain would be in a position to be very helpful to the parties, if the parties requested it. But the United States will be prepared to back up whatever efforts Britain will make and to continue its interests in a peaceful solution of this problem.

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: I think that's absolutely right. Britain has a constitutional and a legal responsibility which, of course, the United States does not have, and therefore it will fall to Britain in any event to carry through the required legislation to validate and legalize what hopefully will emerge in Rhodesia. But quite apart from that, if diplomatic help is wanted to bring the two sides together in the early stages in particular, Britain, I think, would have to take the lead in providing such diplomatic assistance as we could, which would help towards an agreed settlement.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, assuming that there is a peaceful transfer of power in Rhodesia, what steps have you taken, or what guarantees have you sought, that you won't end up with another Angola where the Russians come in and back one faction very heavily and there's a civil war and a radical regime takes over?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Of course, the major responsibility to prevent this will be with the presidents of Africa, and we would assume that they could not want Africa turned into an arena for great power competition. It is our understanding that once an interim government has been formed, guerrilla war would cease.

QUESTION: Two points, sir. Has a document of any kind been passed to the Smith government? Is there anything that has been signed, initialled or exchanged in the form of papers? And

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secondly, you started to say what happens if the operation goes well in the hand-over to the British. What happens if it gets sticky?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We'll get the blame. [Laughter]

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: That's right. [Laughter]

SECRETARY KISSINGER: With respect to your first question, no document has been initialled or signed. Several points have been put forward as our best distillation of the consensus that I have earlier described, and it is those points which the Rhodesian authorities have been discussing all week. We do not know precisely what Mr. Smith is going to say tonight, although he knows precisely what we think the basis of a settlement would be.

QUESTION: Could you just follow up on that? Are those points oral or are they in writing so there can be less ambiguity about what's been said?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We gave him the points in writing.

QUESTION: Could you describe the arguments that you put to Mr. Smith when you talked to him in South Africa and which seem to have persuaded him to accept a deal?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't believe I should go into it at this [inaudible].

QUESTION: Secretary Crosland, could you please tell us in view of the possible threat of outside intervention in Rhodesia or to one of the liberation groups, what is your feeling about how quickly the constitutional conference should be convened and an interim government should come into existence?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Well, generally as quickly as possible. It's impossible to lay down or foresee a precise time-table for this. But the last thing we want, assuming that Mr. Smith's response tonight is "yes," unequivocally "yes," the last thing we want then is a long delay in which everything would get muddled and other people would start poking their noses in and the rest of it. I can't set a time, but I would much rather that it was a matter of weeks at the most. Anyway, as soon as possible.

QUESTION: Before constitutional conference or before an interim government?

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FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Well, first of all, before talks take place between the whites and the blacks on the formation of an interim government, and secondly, before the formation of an interim government. And, as soon as an interim government is formed, then we will take, in London, the necessary legal and Parliamentary action to legalize it.

QUESTION: Dr. Kissinger, have you any doubts at all as to whether Mr. Smith will accept the peace plan?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am hopeful that he will. I have no doubt at the moment, but we just cannot be sure until he has spoken.

QUESTION: Do you think that the Rhodesia peace plan has removed the danger of a race war in southern Africa if it proceeds to plan?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think it has given us the possibility to avoid that danger, and it has already sharply reduced it.

QUESTION: Can you give any idea of the cost to Great Britain and the United States of the peace plan if it's carried out?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We are going to be studying this next week jointly in Washington. We have not arrived at a figure yet.

QUESTION: Do you think that at some point that, as part of this process, Rhodesia will have to renounce UDI [Unilateral Declaration of Independence]?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Well, if this process goes well there are two constitutional acts that are involved. The first one is to legalize the interim government that will come, we hope, into being in a short space of time and the second is at the end of two years, when majority rule has been achieved within the conditions laid down by the Prime Minister on March 22nd. We shall then need final legislation which will confer total independence on what will then be a majority black government in Rhodesia.

QUESTION: Sir, did you mean to say "at the end of two years" as firmly as that?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Well, I can't say. Nobody has laid down the actual day, but Dr. Kissinger as I understand it, and the British Government, have been consistently talking within the phrase used by the Prime Minister on March 22nd, of eighteen months to two years.

QUESTION: Is that Dr. Kissinger's view too about the terms in which he has been conducting the talks?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: That is and has been my view.

QUESTION: You spoke of the talks within Rhodesia between black and white about the formation of an interim government before any United Kingdom legislation. Is there a possibility that those talks could break down in view of the divisions on the African side or do you have assurances from the African side that an interim government can be formed?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, we have taken consistently the position that the African side is responsible for its representation and for its program. The African presidents seem to be confident that they can produce a delegation and we would expect that, after all the anguish that both sides have gone through, that they would conduct the discussions with a sense of responsibility and on that basis we believe a solution could be found.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, given the history of military dictatorships and so forth in Africa, what kind of future do you see for Rhodesia in the event that black majority rule is established?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, I think we should-- we have not even taken the first steps on that road yet and it is premature to speculate until we see how these discussions are going.

QUESTION: Mr. Crosland, this two years more or less--when does the clock start running-- today, at the point of Mr. Smith's announcement or at the beginning of a constitutional conference or when?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: I can't give you a cut and dried answer on a particular day. Let's wait and see what Mr. Smith is going to say tonight. Let us wait and see what reaction there is to that from the black African states and then we shall be able to lay down the kind of timetable and program which we want to see fulfilled.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, since you have been so concerned about the danger of the racial war in southern Africa, I wonder if you could explain once more how the establishment of black, and quite possibly militant regimes, on the borders of South Africa, will reduce the pressure leading to such confrontations in that country.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We now have a war going on in Rhodesia, and we have the danger of war in Namibia. What we are attempting to do is to demonstrate the possibility of peaceful solutions and of the utility of negotiations. Any step that is taken is not going to be a final step in that process. We believe that, if this process, that hopefully will start today, will be carried out to its conclusion, it will contribute to moderation in Africa and to create additional incentives for negotiated solutions.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary--two questions. Is it your understanding that during the interim government Mr. Smith will remain as Prime Minister? Secondly, who do you now understand will share the constitutional talks?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: You must understand that before Mr. Smith has spoken it would not be appropriate for me to go into the details of all the ideas that he may put forward for all of the negotiations that would ensue. The United States has generally taken the position that it is for each side to put forward its representatives and that the United States would not prescribe to either side who should represent it in any talks that might result and, so, let us wait until after Mr. Smith has spoken and then see what delegations are actually being produced by the two sides.

QUESTION: On the constitutional talks?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: On the constitutional talks. We haven't actually thought through chairmanship. We believe that Britain has an important contribution to make.

How it will exercise this will obviously depend on the parties and on the decisions of the British Government.

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Could I just add one word to that? We can't see the nature of the constitutional talks at the moment. We don't know whether this will take the form of a standard regular type of conference or whether the talks will be very much more informal. So any discussions of who will take the chair is premature, but I repeat what I said earlier — that as far as diplomatic help and activity is concerned, the British Government will give all the assistance that it possibly can to whatever talks occur and to make sure they come to a successful conclusion.

QUESTION: Does that mean, Foreign Secretary, that you are opposed in principle to Britain taking the chair at such constitutional talks?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: No, I'm not opposed in principle, I'm not in favor in principle. I can't see the scenario and so I've got to keep all the options open until I can see the scenario more clearly.

QUESTION: Mr. Crosland, are you expecting Mr. Smith to come to London for the constitutional conference as part or as head of that delegation and would you be happy for that to take place?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: I think it highly unlikely that the constitutional conference would take place in London to begin with. I think it would almost certainly take place in Africa.

QUESTION: And would the British Government be happy for Mr. Smith to be part or head of that Rhodesian delegation?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Well, we wouldn't be responsible. I've said we'd give what help we can to the constitutional conference but the people to answer that question would be the black negotiation team, not the British Government.

QUESTION: But you're still prepared for Mr. Smith to be the head of the interim government until the transfer of power takes place?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: I'm not either prepared nor unprepared. This is a matter which has got to be the subject of agreement between the white Rhodesians whoever they're led by in a week's time on the one hand and the black Rhodesians, or the black presidents behind them on the other hand and it's not for the British Government at this moment of time to say that we think should come out of that negotiating process.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, could we hear from both you and from Mr. Crosland, if you could, on your views as to what has produced what you hope will be a successful conclusion? What have been the factors which at this time, after eleven years, seemingly have brought the situation to this climax?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Personal charm (laughter). I think --

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: As soon as he said personal charm someone said Mr. Crosland. (Laughter)

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It was a combination of factors -- a continuation of the war; the assessment by the Rhodesian authorities of the likely trends; the participation of the South African Government in the negotiations and the commitment of the United States Government to a peaceful solution and its willingness to engage itself, together with the efforts that Great Britain has been making consistently, produced new factors in the situation.

QUESTION: Mr. Crosland, could you tell us which will come first -- the constitutional conference or the interim government?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: No, I can't tell you.

QUESTION: Mr. Crosland, do I take it from your earlier reply of the two constitutional acts that are required, that it will be unnecessary for Mr. Smith to actually renounce UDI -- in a formal way?

FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND: Let me make this absolutely clear -- that we have -- that Dr. Kissinger has been pushing, as a joint approach to both sides, a certain number of possibilities that form part of a plan which we hope will be broadly adopted and will lead to the two sides negotiating together. But if Mr. Smith says what we hope and if the American sides react favorably to that, then at that point it becomes for negotiations in Africa to answer the various questions that have been raised during the last two or three minutes. It is not for the United Kingdom Government, nor if it comes to that, for the United States Government, to say in advance they want this, they don't want that -- the other. This is for the whites and the blacks in Africa to agree amongst themselves.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, President Nyerere of Tanzania is quoted as saying that you put a lot of pressure on Rhodesia through South Africa. What kind of pressure did you put and what kind of ultimatum did you deliver?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We delivered no ultimatum and we reviewed the likely evolution of events and the alternatives that were available and we believe that this contributed to the decision. There were no addition -- there were no threats or pressure.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, may I bring you back to the question of money, please? There have been reports that in order to get this plan, a safety net in the amount of 1 1/2 to 2 billion dollars is being considered with

an American contribution that could run to 400-500 million dollars. Could you now sort out the money figures for us please?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, none of the figures have any official status. Secondly, the idea of a safety net is a somewhat crude description of a complicated scheme that has been discussed among officials, that would be alternatively available for the investment or for an insurance scheme for those who might eventually wish to emigrate. There will be discussions next week in Washington between American, British and South African officials to try to refine this and come up with specific figures. At this point no specific figures have been agreed to.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: You said just now that you assumed that there would be a cease-fire in the guerrilla war as soon as the basic settlement had been accepted by Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith has used the device of saying that there has not been a cease-fire to wriggle out from previous obligations. Are you now confident --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, I said when an interim government is formed. But I believe that this too should await Mr. Smith's speech and the negotiations that we hope will follow this speech.

QUESTION: Has Mr. Smith asked that the guerrilla cease-fire should be a condition of his implementing your suggestions?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Again, I believe that Mr. Smith will have to speak for himself but I -- my impression is that he will put forward whatever -- if he -- what he says without preconditions.

QUESTION: Is there any room for Mr. Smith today to say, "Yes, but " or does he have to say "yes" or "no" specifically to the total package? Is there any room for him to hedge on this?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I really am in no position to speak for Mr. Smith. Our impression is, as he has said himself, that his statement will be clear and unambiguous and will leave no room for evasion -- this I gather from his own public statements.

QUESTION: But does he have to accept the total or reject the total or can he accept most of it and say, "But I don't want this piece"?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We'll know in a few hours. We think the process would be helped most if the total package were put forward.

QUESTION: If there is any prospect of them not accepting the total package, would you consider returning or would you say that that's the end of negotiations?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think that the matter has gone so far that it must be concluded. But why speculate about what may happen tonight?

QUESTION: I just wondered what you think might happen if he didn't accept.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, I don't operate on that assumption. I operate on the assumption that -- that the total package will be put forward

QUESTION: Which do you think should come first -- the constitutional conference or the formation of a government?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think it extremely important that the solutions for southern Africa be seen to be African solutions, and that the United States and the United Kingdom, whose primary interest has been to produce peace in southern Africa, not appear to be dictating the precise outcome. Therefore, I believe that we should wait for, first, Mr. Smith's speech and then the African reaction. As my colleague has already stated, the United Kingdom is willing to be helpful; the United States is prepared to be supportive, but let us first get some other reactions on the table.

QUESTION: Have you spoken with Mr. Smith since leaving Africa or any representatives of his government?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, I have not.

QUESTION: Do you expect any trouble from the Soviet Union, Dr. Kissinger, because they have been kicking you rather hard over what you have been trying to do? Do you think that they can stir up diplomatic trouble in the UN or elsewhere in Africa to try and sabotage the whole plan?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We believe that it should be in the interest of all countries to promote peace in southern Africa and we would hope that the Soviet Union would not, for the sake of ideology or great power rivalry, try to introduce an element of contention which must above all hurt the peoples of southern Africa and destroy an opportunity for peace.

QUESTION: Mr. Kissinger, it seems from both you gentlemen then, the U.S. and the UK do not want to take much responsibility for the actual solutions. Can you say how it would be possible for the blacks and whites in Rhodesia to work out an interim government by themselves?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, we did not say they should do it by themselves. I think we both said that we would be active, supportive, cooperative, in any way that we are asked and in any way that can be useful.

Thank you, gentlemen.

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